

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Applicant Processing Center - [REDACTED]

DD/A Registry

86-0355



FROM:

Richard J. Kerr
Deputy Director for Administration

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE 25 February 1986

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building).

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

Director of Communications

2.

Director of Finance

3.

Director of Information Services

4.

Director of Information Technology

5.

EDL

6.

Director of Medical Services

7.

Director of Personnel

8.

Director of Security

9.

Director of Training and Education

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

I plan to send this report to the Executive Director and the three DD's with a note indicating an intention to establish an Applicant Processing Center at [REDACTED] Building. Before I send it outside the DA, I would appreciate any comments you might have and, more specifically, an initial cut at the cost of such a center. Logistics should take a look at the impact the center would have on changes in the population in the new building as well as any other costs. I would like an initial assessment of the cost by 7 March. I don't need a detailed cost assessment but enough information to be able to give the DD's and Ex Dir some sense of the cost involved.

/s/ Dick K.

Richard J. Kerr

Bill/Terry:

Attachment a/s

Pls draft response per SDA remarks & have them to us by 6 March.

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31 January 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: The Advisability of Retaining [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] As A Processing Center--Pros & ConsIntroduction

This paper examines, at your request, the pros and cons of retaining [REDACTED] as an applicant processing center. The Working Group (see Annex A for organizations and names) that was assembled addressed the feasibility not only of [REDACTED] the site but of the processing center itself. This paper presents the group's findings. Judging in either case whether the benefits outweigh the costs is not the paper's purpose or intent.

Overview

A larger issue than the practicality of a processing center or of [REDACTED] its site underlies this paper. It is an issue easily obscured by the complexity of applicant processing and by the conflicting self-interests of each Agency component as they individually sort out the costs and benefits that affect them most. The issue is the Agency's public image.

The image applicants take with them from their experience in Washington during processing affects more than just their decision to accept our offer of employment. That image colors for the rest of their lives their attitude toward the Agency, and the attitudes of all those whom they influence. Thus, the impression is multiplied many times, and its impact carries on long after the applicant departs Washington.

There is more than a tinge of arrogance and complacency in the manner in which we sometimes treat applicants during their visits, shuttling them unescorted from one building to another for interviews, skills and aptitude tests, medical exam, and polygraph, assuming they will find their way on time, letting some go all day without eating, forcing others to lug suitcases with them, not allowing sufficient time for reimbursement before they rush off to catch planes. The truth is the system works

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fairly well, and mishaps are not the rule. Nevertheless, unhappy incidents recur with regularity and suggest that the system is driven more by what is convenient for the Agency than by what is convenient and impressive to the applicant. Surely our image is tarnished and scarred enough by events beyond our control; we need not fuel criticism by willfully sustaining a system that to some applicants, according to their letters, appears makeshift, insensitive, and pointlessly non-competitive with private industry, belying the claim that the Agency is seeking the best and brightest.

25X1 It would appear that the Agency's image could be greatly enhanced by taking full advantage of the benefits to be derived from a processing center, and from that could emerge a better chance of attracting and hiring the talented and dedicated people we need, now and in the future. Whether the processing center should be located at [] or some other central location is another question, to whose resolution this paper will, we hope, contribute.

Regarding the concept of a processing center, it comes as no surprise that centralization would have decidedly positive effects on all aspects of the processing system: greater efficiencies across the board, more flexibility in scheduling appointments, less access of applicants to classified information or to employees under cover, better communication among the processing units, and reductions in processing time. Also, the idea of a Host Center to shepherd applicants through the system offers new and important ways to personalize the process.

25X1 There are naturally drawbacks to centralization. Few benefits come without a price tag. For example, all of the units at [] would be separated from their parent Offices at Headquarters. For some this dislocation would be inconvenient. Of particular concern to the Office of Security is the effect that splitting Polygraph Division would have on that component's overall effectiveness in both the short and long term.

25X1 Several important advantages recommend [] as the site for a processing center: its central location, its access to major highways and airports, the proximity of hotels, and the capital investments already made in the building. Three disadvantages would be insufficient parking, lack of access via public transportation, and inadequate physical security safeguards.

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Pros and Cons of an Applicant Processing Center

Composition and Functions

All but two of the steps in applicant processing (the exceptions being the component interview and certain testing) would be conducted within the processing center, as follows:

- creation and maintenance of the official applicant file
- preliminary telephonic screening by security and medical expeditors to weed out obviously unqualified applicants
- review of qualifications by OP Selection Officers
- routing copies of the Personal History Statement to selected components for their review
- arranging applicant appointments and travel
- testing of applicants' professional aptitudes, skills, and psychological profiles
- initiation of the background investigation
- medical and polygraph examinations
- briefings by Central Cover Staff and the Family and Employee Liaison Office
- reimbursement of applicants for travel, food, and lodging

To perform these functions, the units listed in Annex B would be located in the same building.

Examinations

25X1 In a centralized system, both the medical and polygraph
25X1 exams would be given in the same building. As it now stands, the medical is conducted at [] and the polygraph at Headquarters. In the near future, applicant polygraphs will take place at the [] building. Conducting both exams in the same building where testing and other processing would occur would have clear advantages beyond simply greater flexibility in scheduling. Being located in the same building would enable faster, more reliable communications among Employment and the polygraph and medical units. This improvement would have

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would have farther reaching benefits than might at first seem apparent.

The most problematic phase of processing applicants has been the smooth, efficient, and timely scheduling of medical and polygraph appointments. This issue, more than any other, has tried the patience, frayed the nerves, and challenged the abilities of dedicated professionals in all three components and eroded the credibility of the process to the rest of the Agency.

Medical and polygraph "slots" are a limited resource that must be scheduled weeks, and in the case of polygraphs months, in advance. Inefficient use of this resource is costly, but achieving efficient use is an uphill struggle against heavy odds. Changes in applicants' plans cause frequent cancellations and reschedulings, sometimes on the very eve of appointments. Due to the breakneck pace of processing and to human error, which is being reduced through computerized scheduling, Polygraph Division and Medical Selection Division (MSD) are sometimes not informed of cancellations, and those slots then go to waste. Moreover, applicants occasionally show up for appointments that were believed to have been cancelled, and the applicants are then turned away or, more often, force fit into the schedule at the testing unit's expense. Add to this confusion the no-shows and tardy arrivals, and the dynamic and volatile nature of the problem come clearly into focus.

25X1 Employment must deliver a copy of the applicant's PHS to Polygraph one week in advance of the appointment. Nearly every week, for one reason or another, an examiner at Headquarters is unable to locate a PHS, prompting frantic calls to Employment or Security Records Division [redacted] for rush delivery of another copy. Were the polygraphers in the same building as Employment, the examiner could obtain a copy handily in minutes and without fuss.

In short, placing all three activities--the scheduling and the medical and polygraph exams--in one building would go a long way toward preventing these kinds of problems and would facilitate corrective measures when problems arose, as they surely would.

The Office of Security is concerned about personal safety of its staff, particularly polygraphers attached to the Center. Because buildings away from Headquarters lack the physical security of the Headquarters complex, examiners could be exposed to reprisals by vengeful applicants distressed over their examinations.

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Testing

With a few exceptions testing of applicants during their visits to Washington would be conducted in the processing center. Annex C shows the current variety of tests and the diversity of test sites.

Centralization of testing would offer a number of compelling advantages. It would:

- Eliminate laborious, time-consuming trips by applicants between Headquarters, Ames, Chamber of Commerce, and [redacted] -trips which often cause applicants to miss or be late for appointments.
- Simplify and offer greater latitude in scheduling of appointments.



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- Promote better and more reliable test results, because applicants would not be rushing pell-mell from one building to another and thus would likely be more relaxed and composed.

From these considerations the idea of a Testing Center suggests itself for the following reasons:

- Many of the tests do not require a proctor with unique or specialized qualifications. As OTE's Language Training Division observes, even language testing is feasible in such a Testing Center. The applicant, seated in a room in the center, could be tested orally by phone either by an instructor at the Language School (CofC) or by an FBIS linguist (Key). Such telephone testing is commonplace both in OTE and FBIS. The reading and writing portions could be administered at the Testing Center, which would relieve instructors and linguists of this onerous chore which diverts them from their primary duties about 25 times each week.
- Most of the tests are standardized, pre-packaged instruments, and their scoring is mechanistic, routine, and fairly uncomplicated and thus easily learned.
- Much more efficient use of testing space would be possible in centralized testing rooms than if the rooms were dispersed throughout the processing center, under the control of different components, and used for other purposes at other times.
- The testing environment--outside noise, interruptions and distractions, seating and desk arrangements, air quality, and room temperature--could be better controlled and standardized.
- High quality and consistency of testing procedures could be more easily maintained.
- Most tests are now scheduled at specific times on specific days of the week for efficient use of the testing rooms in the various buildings. Not only do these rooms serve other purposes, but the units and their personnel have other competing duties. Applicant appointments are therefore scheduled around these dates. With a Testing Center, however, whose sole function would be testing and whose facilities would be committed full-time to

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that purpose, virtually any test could be given at any time and on very short notice. This flexibility would be a godsend to applicant processing.

- A central stock of all tests would be maintained for ready use in the Testing Center.
- The Center would score many of the tests and furnish the results to authorized components either by phone, in writing, or by computer.
- The Center could also compile cumulative records of many of the test results and make these records available to authorized components for analysis.

Component Interviews

Under the system being examined in this paper, applicants must continue to visit the Agency's various buildings for interviews with interested components. Although these trips take time and add to the complexity of scheduling, the alternative--sending component representatives to the processing center--while convenient for the applicant, would be impractical and wasteful of management resources. Moreover, interviews within components allow applicants to observe the office environment and to meet people with whom they may later work. Surveys of new employees underline the importance of the component visit in the applicant's decision to work for the Agency.

On the negative side, of course, is concern that a large percentage of these applicants will subsequently be rejected on security grounds and will have had potential though peripheral access to classified information during their visit to the component.

Security

Centralizing processing would tighten security to the extent that applicants would use the shuttle less and visit fewer Agency buildings. They would therefore be exposed to fewer employees under cover and would have less access to classified information which they might see or overhear.

Security could be further improved by dividing the central processing building into two areas: one in which applicants would be prohibited, the other (where tests, examinations, and interviews would be conducted and where the cafeteria would be located) in which applicants would have free, unescorted access.

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This arrangement would eliminate the need for security escorts, facilitate movement of applicants from one appointment to another, and aid employees under cover to avoid contact with applicants.

Regarding cover, a representative of the Central Cover Staff would be located in the building to provide all cover briefings that are given prior to EOD and to serve as a liaison with CCS and as a referent on cover matters.

Reimbursement

A decentralized disbursing facility in the same building as the processing center would be essential.

- Many applicants would have all of their appointments there and, short of separate trips to Headquarters, would have no way to be reimbursed promptly for their expenses. They could, of course, mail in their receipts, but payment would be delayed, and applicants on thin budgets (most of them) appreciate receiving their money right away.
- It would relieve Central Travel at Headquarters of 40 percent of its reimbursement transactions which in July 1985, for example, involved payments to 913 applicants (662 in person, 251 by mail) totaling \$167,000.
- It would help to separate applicants from employees under cover who currently use the same travel reimbursement facility at Headquarters that applicants use.
- Employees located at the center would also use the disbursing facility, particularly Employment, many of whose officers travel regularly and require advances and refunds.

Other Benefits

Collocation of the processing units would stimulate more frequent and direct communications among them and generate greater sharing of information, a greater sense of teamwork, and greater esprit. New lines of communication both formal and informal would inevitably evolve. Better communications could result in early identification of problems and forestall difficult and embarrassing situations whose resolution can be protracted and consume inordinate resources.

Many of the financial and housing dilemmas in which new employees find themselves could have been averted or at least

mitigated had they obtained information on such matters before coming to Washington. For that reason FELO should be collocated with the processing center to make FELO accessible to applicants who require information and counseling on relocation, housing, and living in the metropolitan area.

One idea for helping applicants through the maze of appointments is a Host Center. It would be manned by a staff of two officers thoroughly versed in the processing system, be located in the processing center's reception area, and be the first and last stop on every applicant's schedule, logging them in and out, shepherding them through their appointments, knowing their whereabouts at all times, serving as message and information center, storing luggage, and handling emergencies. The Host Center's overall mission would be to personalize the process, making applicants feel that the Agency cares for their well-being and extends to them whatever support they need during their visit to be comfortable and to be given the chance to do their very best. If run with flair, discipline, sensitivity, and attention to detail, a Host Center could have dramatically positive impact on applicants and on their processing.

25X1 Pros and Cons of [] as the Site

Floor Space

25X1 There is ample room in [] to house all of the units projected for a processing center (see Annex 3), leaving roughly 31,000 square feet (two floors) of unused space. Situating these units in [] would free about 43,000 square feet in the New Headquarters Building. Because plans for the new structure are already being implemented, the relocation of these units to [] would necessitate alterations in the new building that could result in additional design and construction costs in the neighborhood of \$600,000. These are, however, soft and preliminary estimates. Considerably more data must be gathered and analyzed to produce hard figures on floor-space and cost trade-offs.

Moving Expenses

25X1 All of the units comprising the processing center are currently scheduled to move to the New Headquarters Building. The fact that all but three of these units are already located at [] would save moving expenses. However, some repositioning and reconfiguration of the units now in [] would be likely and would require funding. Whether there would be a net savings is an issue for further study.

25X1 The relocation of the three units--Division IV, PSD, and a
25X1 subelement of Polygraph Division--that are not now at []
[] would cost approximately the same whether they are assigned to
[] or to the New Headquarters Building.

Location

25X1 There are two notable disadvantages to the location of the
[] Building as a processing Center:

- 25X1 -- Traffic in the [] area is heavy and congested and
will worsen with the boom in commercial growth there.
- 25X1 -- Public transportation to [] is inadequate and will
make reaching the processing center difficult for some
local applicants. A single Metro bus route now serves
the building, and the Metro subway is virtually inaccessible.

25X1 There are a good many advantages, however, to []
location:

- The building itself represents significant capital
investments by the Agency for physical security, computer
installations, communications systems, and other necessities. Retention of the building would preserve these
investments, which would have to be borne again if the
processing center were located in a new building.
- 25X1 -- The projected move of some of the Agency's S&T components
25X1 [] and the vacating of a number of buildings (see
map on next page) will place [] in a more central
location with respect to other Agency facilities. In
fact, all of the outbuildings except []
25X1 [] will be closer to
25X1 [] than to Headquarters.
- 25X1 -- The closing of eight buildings will cause a restructuring
of Agency shuttle routes, making possible more frequent
stops at [] and quicker trips between it and other
buildings. The impact of these changes in the shuttle
25X1 system would be significant for [] which, as a pro-
cessing center, would become a heavily trafficked gateway
through which applicants would pass going to and coming
from their component interviews.
- The network of roads around the building connects with
all of the major metropolitan arteries (see map).

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25X1

Parking

25X1

Several factors point toward a reduction in the demand for parking at [] if a processing center were established there.

25X1

-- "Unoccupied" rooms for testing, examinations, and interviews in the processing center would replace current office spaces, decreasing the number of employees in the building.

25X1

-- The large number of employees from other buildings who visit [] each day at the present time by car reflects the presence there of the Offices of General Counsel, Security, and Personnel. The move of these Offices to the New Headquarters Building will reduce the flow of such visitors.

25X1

-- The components moving to [] might not be as populous as those departing, and their clientele would be primarily applicants rather than employees. As many as 25 employees per day now visit PSD at Ames for testing and counseling, but most travel to Ames via the shuttle and would probably do so to []

25X1

-- More frequent and quicker shuttle trips to and from []--a likelihood, as noted earlier, when other buildings are vacated--would encourage employees visiting there not to use their own vehicles.

25X1

-- The majority of applicants visiting [] would come by taxi or hotel shuttle and would not need parking.

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25X1 Despite these reductive factors, parking at [] will
pose a major problem as it does today. According to GSA
standards, around 700 employees should occupy the 97,000 square
25X1 feet of floor space in [] (some 740 employees are now
there). Yet, the parking lot provides spaces for only 500
vehicles.

There would appear to be four alternatives:

- (1) Rent additional parking from adjacent commercial buildings.
- (2) Build a parking deck. Construction would cost around \$8,000 per parking space.
- 25X1 (3) Do not fill [] to the capacity recommended by the GSA guidelines.
- (4) Select some combination of 1, 2, and 3.

Food Service

25X1 The sense of the Working Group is that the dining area of the [] cafeteria, which is already crowded when in use, would be inadequate for a processing center. Most applicants would not come by car nor bring their lunch and would be confined to eating in the building. The nearest eatery is two miles away. To meet this increased demand, the cafeteria would probably have to be moved to the ground floor.

Computer Support

25X1 OIT has a Data Access Center (DAC) in [] today and
believes that moving or changing this DAC to meet the needs of a
25X1 processing center at [] would not be a problem, though it would be a necessary element in planning for such a center.

Physical Security

25X1 Although, as stated earlier, the Agency has made sizable investments in security measures at [] there is genuine concern over the building's vulnerability to terrorist attack.
25X1 If [] were retained, additional protective measures would seem warranted.

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ANNEX 2

Component	Composition	Function	Present Location	Current Project Location
OP/Employment				
DDE	all of current staff	management		NHB
Division I (officer-technicals)	all of current staff	applicant selection and processing		NHB
Division II (career trainees)	all of current staff	applicant recruitment, selection, and processing		NHB
Division III (recruitment operations)	all of current staff	management of Recruitment Activity Centers		NHB
Division IV (clericals)	clerical recruiters would not be located	applicant selection and processing		NHB
Student Programs	all of current staff	applicant recruitment, selection, and processing		NHB
Expeditor Group	all of current staff	preliminary security & medical screening of applicants		NHB
Family and Employee Liaison Office (FELO)	all of current staff	counseling applicants and employees on housing, finances, and relocation		NHB
Host Center (new unit)	staff of 2	reception of applicants; log in and out; shepherd them through appointments; know their whereabouts; trouble-shoot; serve as applicant message center and custodian of luggage	(does not exist now)	-----
Testing Center (new unit)	staff of 2 to 3	conducts all applicant testing except for FBIS linguists	(does not exist now)	-----

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Component	Composition	Function	Present Location	Currently Projected Location
OMS				
Medical Selection Division (MSD)	all of current staff	clinical and psychiatric examinations of applicants		NIIB
Psychological Services Division (PSD)	all of current staff	Assessment & Evaluation (A&E) and other testing of applicants and staff counseling of managers		NIIB
OS				
subelement of Polygraph Division	40 polygraphers: essentially the unit to be located at <div data-bbox="537 1394 781 1436" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 150px;"></div>	applicant polygraph examinations		NIIB
subelement of Clearance Division (CD)	(to be determined by OS)	processing of applicant security clearances		NIIB
subelement of Security Records Division (SRD)	(to be determined by OS)	processing of applicant security clearances		NIIB
OF				
Disbursing Office (new unit)	standard model	reimbursement of applicant travel and other expenses, plus regular disbursement services for staff employees	(does not exist now) (Central Travel at Hqs handles reimbursement of applicant)	-----
DO				
representative of Central Cover Staff (CCS)	single individual	cover briefings and liaison with CCS	(does not exist now)	-----

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TESTS GIVEN TO APPLICANTS DURING PROCESSING IN WASHINGTON

ANNEX C

Name of Test	Who Gives It	Where	Which Applicants Take It
Assessment and Evaluation (A&E)	PSD	CofC	CT Program, OTE staff instructors, NCI
electronic technician test	OC		OC electronic technicians
English editing	FBIS	Key	FBIS translators
foreign broadcast monitoring	FBIS	Key	FBIS translators
foreign language	OTE & FBIS	CofC & Key	OTE language instructors and FBIS translators
geography and international relations	FBIS	Key	FBIS translator
Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT)	PSD, OTE, & Div II	CofC &	CT Program
Morse Code aptitude test	OC		OC telecommunications specialists
Professional Applicant Test Battery (PATB)	PSD	CofC & George Mason Un.	CT Program, all DI analysts, all DA officers except OC and OIS, all DS&T officers if bachelor degree within two years
Project Screen (psychological test)	OC		OC telecommunications specialists
Short Employment Test (SET)	Div IV	Ames	clericals and certain support personnel
shorthand	Div IV	Ames	clericals
typing	Div IV & OC	Ames &	clericals and OC telecom specialists
utilities equipment specialist test	OC		utilities equipment specialists
Wolfe (Brandon-Wolfe)	PSD	CofC	computer scientists and programmers

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